

Message Text

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PAGE 01 YAOUND 04527 150930Z

ACTION AF-10

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SUBJECT: CAMEROON: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

1. SUMMARY: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD IN CAMEROON ON 16 OCT 1977. THE SINGLE PARTY, CAMEROON NATIONAL UNION ANTICIPATES MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS WHOSE RESULTS WILL NOT CONSTITUTE OR ENGENDER ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL CLIMATE OF THE COUNTRY. CAMEROONIANS WILL SELECT COUNCILLORS JO FALL WITHIN THE IDEOLOGICAL AND STRUCTURAL RUBRIC OF THE CNU TO FUNCTION MANAGERIALLY IN LOCAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH ARTICLE 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES "POLITICAL PARTIES AND GROUPS MAY TAKE PART IN ELECTIONS," IN ACTUAL PRACTICE CAMEROON HAS A SINGLE PARTY SYSTEM UNDER THE AEGIS OF CAMEROON NATIONAL UNION (CNU). IN ORDER TO BE PLACED ON THE PARTY'S FINAL LIST, POTENTIAL COUNCILLORS FILED THEIR NOMINATION WITH LOCAL "CELLS" OF THE CNU WHICH WERE FORWARDED TO DIVISIONAL CNU SECTIONS THEN TO CNU NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU IN YAOUNDE FOR FINAL SCREENING AND ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION. A PRESIDENTIAL DECREE STIPULATES THAT CANDIDATES RESIDE IN THE AREA OF THE COUNCIL FOR WHICH THEY ARE CANDIDATES OR HAVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THESE AREAS. HOWEVER, THE NUMBER OF NONRESIDENT

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PAGE 02 YAOUND 04527 150930Z

COUNCILLORS SHOULD NOT EXCEED ON-THIRD OF THE TOTAL.

3. APPLICATION OF A CANDIDATE MUST BE ENDORSED BY AN AGENT APPOINTED BY THE POLITICAL PARTY. COUNTING OF VOTES WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE DIVISION BY A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE MINISTER OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION AND PRESIDED OVER BY AN APPOINTED MAGISTRATE. COMMISSION MEETS ON

DAY AFTER THE POLLS ARE CLOSED AND WILL COMPLETE ITS RORK
AFTER EIGHT DAYS.

4. SEVERAL CANDIDATES CAN CONTEST AN ELECTION, BUT, BECAUSE
SELECTION IS MADE BY NATIONAL POLITICAL BUREAU, THE CHOICE IS
PREDETERMINED BY CNU. RATIONALE IS THAT FOLLOWING THIS
PROCEDURE OVERCOMES PERSONAL CONFLICTS AND LOCAL POWER STRUGGLES.

5. CANDIDATES WILL VIE FOR SEATS IN 165 LOCAL COUNCILS, 22 COUNCILS
ARE CLASSIFIED AS URBAN WHILE 143 ARE CLASSIFIED AS RURAL.
THERE ARE A TOTAL OF 18, 582 CNU APPROVED CANDIDATES FOR 4,940
SEATS.

6. POLITICAL MEETINGS UNDER AEGIS OF GOVERNORS AND MAYORS
HAVE BEEN HELD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY EXHORTING CITIZENS TO
GO TO THE POLLS ON OCT. 16. WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF
OBTAINING A 100 PERCENT TURN-OUT. THEMES WHICH HAVE BEEN
EMPHASIZED RANGE FROM CONTRIBUTING TO THE ADVENT OF A NEW
CAMEROON ESCAPING FROM UNDERDEVELOPMENT TO PROMISES OF THE
REDUCTION F SOCIAL EVILS, PARASITISM, AND CONTRIBUTION TO
PARTY'S VITALITY AND DERIVATIVELY THE ATTAINMENT OF A TRULY
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM. EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE NEED FOR
SIMPLICATION AND EFFECTIVE AUTONOMY OF THE MUNICIPALITIES,
PLUS CREATION OF DEVELOPMENT UNITS. THESE ARE DEFINED AS
FOLLOWS: A. SIMPLIFICATION - TOWN COUNCILS ARE CONTROLLED BY
THE MAYOR WHO IS ELECTED WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, ASSISTED
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PAGE 03 YAOUND 04527 150930Z

BY PERSONNEL EQUALLY ELECTED. B. AUTONOMY - PROVIDE MUNICIPALITIES
WITH ORGANS TO SETTLE LOCAL PROBLEMS WITHOUT HAVING RECOURSE
TO CENTRAL AUGBCJTY. C. DEVELOPMENT - GOVERNMENTS, TO MAKE

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND AUTHORIZE COUNCILS TO COLLECT
TAXES. NUNICIPAL STAFF WILL BE TRAINED AT BUEA INSTITUTE.

7. COMMENT: THE HOLDING OF MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS EVERY FIVE
YEARS IS ONE MORE EXAMPLE OF THE MOBILIZATION OF THE POPULATION
THROUGH THE PARTY STRUCTURE TO GIVE THE PEOPLE ON THE LOCAL
LEVEL A SINSE OF PARTICIPATION IN DETRMINING THEIR LOCAL
REPRESENTATIVES. THE PROCEDURES INVOLVE A CONTROLLED ELEMENT
LDDCMICE AND WILL PROBABLY RESULT IN FRIENDLY COMPETITION
BETK EN VARIOUS PARTY ELEMENNS TGNFBENWHO CAN TURN OU5 THE
LARGEST VOTE. WHILE THERE MAY BE NO SURPRISES, THE ELECTIONS
WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE LOCAL COUNCILS TO GET
SOME FRESH PERSONNEL, WHO MAY USE THEIR NEW POSITIONS TO ADVANCE
THEIR CAREERS IN THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL HIERARCHIES.
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